THE

Dean of CHICHESTER's SERMON

At St. BRIDGET's-Church,

ON

EASTER-TUESDAY, *April* 23. 1717.

Bateman, Mayor.

Martis xxx°. *Die* April' 1717.
Annoq; *Regni Regis* GEORGII,
Magnæ Britanniæ, *&c. Tertio.*

IT is Ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Dr. SHERLOCK, Dean of *Chicheſter*, for his Sermon preach'd before this Court, and the Governors of the ſeveral Hoſpitals of this City, at the Pariſh Church of St. *Bridget*, on *Tueſday* in *Eaſter*-Week laſt, and that he be deſired to Print the ſame.

Per Cur'.

Le GROS.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

LORD-MAYOR,

THE

ALDERMEN,

AND

GOVERNORS of the ſeveral Hoſpitals of the City of *London*,

AT THE

Pariſh-Church of St. BRIDGET,

ON

TUESDAY in *Eaſter*-Week, *April* 23. 1717.

By THOMAS SHERLOCK, D. D.
Dean of *Chicheſter*, Maſter of the *Temple*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

LONDON:
Printed for J. PEMBERTON, at the *Buck* and *Sun* againſt St. *Dunſtan*'s-Church in *Fleetſtreet*. MDCCXVII.

Bp K

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SERMON

Preach'd before the

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ALDERMEN,

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Governors of the several Hospitals

of the City of London,

AT THE

Parish-Church of ST. BRIDGET,

TUESDAY in Easter-Week, April 23. 1717.

By THOMAS SHERLOCK, D. D.

Dean of Chichester, Master of the Temple, and

Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTON, at the Buck and Sun

against St. Dunstan's-Church in Fleetstreet. MDCCXVII.

Acts XX. 35.

I have ſhewed you all things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

THESE Words conclude the moving Speech which St. *Paul* made to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, when he took his final Leave of them: The Time he had to diſcourſe with them was but little, and the Occaſion was very Solemn; which Circumſtances would determine him to mention nothing to them, but what he judged to be of the laſt Conſequence and Concern; and what they ought always to remember, as the dying Words of their great Teacher and Apoſtle. At the 25th Verſe, you find him under the Paſſion of a Father bidding adieu to his Children and the World; *And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my face no more.* But to ſhew that his Care for them would outlive himſelf, he gives them his laſt Advice, the beſt, the only Legacy

he had to beſtow. Two Things he eſpecially recommends to them, The Care of the Church of God, and the providing for the Neceſſities of the Poor and Helpleſs. The former Charge you have at the 28th Verſe; *Take heed therefore unto your ſelves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.* The latter you read in the Words of the Text: *I have ſhewed you all things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

There are ſome Duties ſo eſſential to Religion, ſo neceſſary to form the Character of a good Man, much more of a good Chriſtian, that they always have been, and, I hope, will always continue to be the Preacher's common Topick. Yet this, I know, is in ſome reſpects a Diſadvantage, and that Exhortations of this kind are eſteemed to be ſo much things of Courſe, that they are often uſed with more effect by others, from whom they are leſs expected. I have need therefore to beſpeak your Favour, that I may be heard on this Subject, without incurring the Cenſure of being thought a common Beggar. And yet not to diſſemble my Intention, beg I wou'd; partly indeed for their Sakes, whoſe Neceſſities can no other ways be relieved but by Charity; but

but much more for your ſakes, whoſe ample Fortunes, if rightly adminiſtred, entitle you to the choiceſt Bleſſings of the Goſpel: *For it is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

In ſpeaking of the Duty and Obligations of Charity, in this reſtrain'd Senſe of the Word; in which it regards only the Temporal Wants and Neceſſities of our Brethren; there are Three Things proper to be conſidered.

Firſt, How far the Obligations of this Duty extend; for that they do not extend equally to all, is evident, becauſe ſuch as are qualified to Receive, are in all ordinary Caſes exempted from Giving.

Secondly, Who are duly qualified to receive Charity.

Thirdly, What is the Bleſſing and Reward that attends upon the faithful Diſcharge of this Duty.

The Firſt thing to be conſidered is, How far this Duty extends: I have ſhewed you all Things, ſays the Apoſtle, *How that ſo labouring* ye ought to ſupport the Weak. In the Verſes preceding the Text, he had ſet before them his own Example, and the Method he took to provide for himſelf, and thoſe who were with him. *I have coveted*, ſays he, *no Man's Silver or Gold, or Apparel. Yea, your ſelves know, that theſe Hands have miniſtred*

ſtred unto my neceſſities, and to them that were with me. Now the Exhortation of the Text being founded on the Example which the Apoſtle himſelf had given, and thoſe Words, *That ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak*, neceſſarily referring to ſuch Labour as St. *Paul had undergone*, when his own Hands miniſtred to his own Neceſſities; 'tis evident, that the Apoſtle directed, that Part of what they cou'd Earn, even by the Labour of their Hands, ſhou'd be ſet aſide and dedicated to Works of Charity. The ſame Direction is repeated in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, Chap. iv. V. 28. *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* Where you find Labour enjoined them, not only that they might have an honeſt Means of ſupporting themſelves, but that they might have ſomething likewiſe to ſpare in Charity to ſuch as were in Diſtreſs, and unable to work for their own Living. As the Apoſtle pleads his own Example to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*; ſo does he likewiſe to the *Theſſalonians*, in his Epiſtle wrote to them; *Neither did we*, ſays he, *eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you. Not becauſe we have not power*, (*i. e.* a Right to claim a Maintenance as Miniſters

ſters of the Goſpel) *but to make our ſelves an enſample for you to follow us.* Cap. 3. v. 9.

From theſe Paſſages laid together, 'tis manifeſt, that the Apoſtle calls upon all indifferently, the Elders and Paſtors of the Church, as well as others, to labour, working with their Hands; and he charges on their Labour, not only the Duty of providing for themſelves and Families, but alſo the Care of ſupporting thoſe among them who were indigent and neceſſitous: But the Meaſures and Proportions of Charity not being Things of a determinate Nature, but ſuch as are relative to the Circumſtances and Conditions of Times and Perſons, and vary and change together with them; it muſt be abſurd to apply the Rules relating to Charity, which are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, to our ſelves and our own Times, without making a due Allowance for the difference in our Circumſtances, and theirs to whom the Rules were firſt directed. And therefore to give you a juſt Senſe of the Meaning of the Text, and of other Apoſtolical Rules concerning the Practice of Charity, it will be neceſſary to ſhew you what was the State of the Times and Perſons to which thoſe Rules have Reference.

The Church of Chriſt at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, conſiſted almoſt wholly of the Poor and Indigent, ſuch as were hardly able to Support and Maintain themſelves by

their Labour, much leſs to be Liberal towards the Support of others: For this Reaſon St. *Paul* choſe rather to work for his Bread with his own Hands, than to make his Miniſtry burdenſome to the Churches; tho' at the ſame time he aſſerts the Right he had to be ſupported by them in his Function, notwithſtanding the Narrowneſs of their own Circumſtances. The Learning and Education of the firſt Converts were no better than their Fortunes; and even the Rulers of the Church were oftentimes taken from Trades and mean Employments: The Spirit of God wonderfully ſupplying their Defects, and enabling them under all outward Diſadvantages to promote the Cauſe of the Goſpel with great Courage and Succeſs. Upon this account the Goſpel is ſpoken of, as the peculiar Portion and Inheritance of the Poor; our Saviour gives it as a Characteriſtick of Himſelf and his Miſſion, That *the Poor had the Goſpel preached to them*, Matth. 11. 25. And St. *Paul* addreſſing to the *Corinthians*, diſcovers to us the Condition of that Church, *Ye ſee your calling, Brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the Fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the World, to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath*

hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are. 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27, 28.

Theſe Circumſtances of the firſt Chriſtians conſidered, 'tis eaſy to juſtify the Propriety of the Apoſtle's Exhortation in the Text. When you reflect how Poverty reign'd thro' the whole Body, you will not think it ſtrange that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Labour, even to the Elders of the Church; ſince their own Labour and Work were the only Riches the Chriſtians of thoſe Days were in Poſſeſſion of; and it muſt be either Perverſeneſs or Ignorance that makes ſome argue from this, and other like Paſſages of Scripture, againſt a ſettled Maintenance for the Chriſtian Clergy; without ſeeing, that the Conſequence, if there be any thing in it, muſt equally affect the whole Body of Chriſtians: For the Reaſon why the Governors of the Church were Poor, was, becauſe the whole Church was ſo; and if the Example muſt be preſſed to oblige the preſent Times, all Men muſt part either with their Eſtates, or their Religion; otherwiſe we cannot be in the Condition of the Primitive Church. It wou'd at this Time of Day be no very proper Exhortation to call upon all Chriſtians without Diſtinction, to work with their Hands, that they might have ſomething to ſpare in Charity; but it was not only proper, but neceſſary in the Beginning, when there was no other Source of Riches in the Church, but the Work and Labour of Chriſtians.

ſtians. In the Text, you ſee the Elders, and with them all others, were called upon to labour, that they might be able to ſupport the Weak: And in the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, the Precept is General, *To labour, working with the hands*, that there may be ſomething to ſpare to him that needeth. Can you imagine, that nothing is fit to be dedicated to Charity, but what is earn'd by Bodily Labour? Or, that thoſe who have plentiful Fortunes and Eſtates are obliged to work with their Hands, that they may by their Labour ſupply the Wants of others, which they can better and more effectually ſupply out of their large Revenues? It may be, and certainly is, very proper for us to exhort you to part with ſomething out of your Abundance, to eaſe the Wants of the Poor, to ſpare ſomething out of the Superfluities of Fortune, to ſupport the Neceſſitous: But it had been very improper for the Apoſtles ſo to have exhorted Chriſtians, at a Time when there were none who had either Abundance or Superfluity; all they cou'd do was to admoniſh, and perſuade thoſe who were able to labour, to labour more abundantly, that they might be in a Condition to contribute to the Relief of ſuch as were unfit for Work by Age, Sickneſs, or other Infirmity. Thoſe who are able to work, who are bleſſed with Health, and Strength, and Soundneſs of Limbs, are Rich with

with reſpect to thoſe, who are incapable thro' want of Limbs, or by the weight of Years, to aſſiſt themſelves; and therefore, when bodily Labour was the whole Riches of the Church, there was a neceſſity that the Strong ſhou'd work to ſupport the Weak; or that the Weak ſhou'd periſh in their Want and Povety. And this ſhews the Reaſon of ſuch Precepts of Charity, in which Men are moved to part with ſomething, even out of the little they can Earn by the Sweat of their Brows.

This will help us likewiſe to underſtand ſome other Paſſages of Scripture relating to the Exerciſe of Charity. St. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians* timely Notice of his Intention, to make a Collection among them for Charitable Uſes; and exhorts them to lay by a little every Week, as they cou'd ſpare it, that he might find them prepared to contribute when he ſhou'd come. Now this plainly regards their Poverty and low Circumſtances; for had they been Rich, there had been no need for it; but they were not ſo Wealthy as to pay Bills at Sight; and therefore, their only way was to prepare their Sum by little and little, as their Circumſtances wou'd give them leave to ſpare it.

In the Second Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, the Apoſtle is upon the ſame Argument, and preſſes them to be Liberal with great Earneſtneſs; but that he might not ſeem to bear too hard

hard upon their Neceſſities, he thus correct himſelf; *I mean not that other Men be eaſed, and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a ſupply for their want*, 2 Cor. 8. 13, 14. What does this Equality mean, which he would introduce between the Givers and Receivers of Charity? Muſt we ſtrip our ſelves ſo far as to be upon a Level with the Poor, who ask our Alms? This is a hard Saying, and if purſued ſtrictly, would introduce great Confuſion and Diſorder into the World. But if you conſider the Condition of the Church when the Apoſtle wrote, you'll ſee how properly he addreſſes to them. They might well have ſaid to him, Why muſt all the Burden lie on us, what have we that we do not purchaſe by irkſome Toil and Labour? To prevent which Complaint, the Apoſtle is before-hand with them in declaring, That he meant not that they ſhou'd be burdened, and others ſet at eaſe: Had he been applying to the Rich and Wealthy, there cou'd have been no occaſion for this Caution, for they can give with a liberal Hand, and yet not be burdened. So likewiſe the Equality he ſpeaks of has the ſame View, he preſſes it not as in it ſelf juſt or neceſſary; but in reſpect to the Time it cou'd not be avoided; for when there are none but Poor to releive the Poor, 'tis plain how near the Equality muſt be between the Giver

Giver and Receiver. This Equality therefore, the Apoſtle does not lay down as a general Rule and Proportion, to be obſerved in Charity; but rather excuſes it, as the neceſſary Circumſtance of the Charity of thoſe Times.

From what has been ſaid, we may learn to give an Anſwer to the firſt Enquiry, namely, How far the Duty of Charity extends? The Apoſtle brings all under the Obligations of it, who are able to Labour; but this muſt be mitigated by the difference of Circumſtances between us, and thoſe to whom the Apoſtle ſpoke. He preſſed all to Labour, in order to their being Charitable; the Reaſon is plain, he had none to ſpeak to but ſuch as lived by their Labour: But were he in this Place, at this Day, his Exhortation I doubt not would be directed, eſpecially to the Rich and Wealthy, to ſuch of you as enjoy the Bleſſings of Heaven in an uncommon Degree. Thoſe who live by their Labour, are Rich and Proſperous in Compariſon of the poor Wretches who move miſerably on Crutches, or who want Hands to help themſelves; and they owe a Tribute to God for the Strength they enjoy of his Gift. This is plain from the Apoſtle's Rule; and if it is, if even the meaner ſort are indebted to their great Maſter, and muſt pay an Acknowledgment out of the little they receive; how much greater are your Obligations, who neither Toil, nor Spin, and yet are cloathed

cloathed in Glory, who neither Reap nor Gather into Barns, and yet are fed in Plenty? This is plain. But 'tis harder to ſay, with reſpect to the lower part of Mankind, where the Obligations to this Duty begins; for altho' ſome who Labour may be Debtors to Charity, yet all are not, becauſe all are not able to anſwer the Neceſſities of themſelves and their Families by the Profit of their Work, and ſuch can be under no Call to contribute to others. If I may have leave to deliver an Opinion in a Matter no where clearly determined, I wou'd found it on the Advice which St. *Paul* gives to the *Corinthians*, That they ſhould lay by in ſtore the Firſt Day of every Week, as God had proſpered them; that is, that ſome part of what remained after a Proviſion for the preſent Occaſions of themſelves and Families, ſhould be reſerved to Charity. In this View, all who are in a ſaving Way, or who may be ſo with prudent Care, are under the Obligations of Charity; for 'tis but reaſonable, that we ſhou'd do good in Proportion as we grow Rich. Between our own preſent Wants, and the preſent Wants of others, Nature will admit of no Compariſon; but when we are able to lay up for our ſelves, 'tis hardly conſiſtent with the Love we owe our Brother, to be ſo partial to our ſelves, as to ſuffer the Care for our own future Wants, to ſhut out the Conſideration of his preſent Miſery.

ſery. But this Matter is left to every Man's Diſcretion, in order to prove his Love, ſince too ſtrict Rules would in great Meaſure deſtroy the Virtue of Charity, the true Value of which lies chiefly in this, that 'tis a free-will Offering.

Let us then proceed to the Second Enquiry, namely, 2. Who are duly qualified to receive Charity.

I have ſhewed you all things, how that ſo labouring, ye ought to ſupport the weak. By the *Weak* here we muſt underſtand, ſuch as are not able to labour and work for their own living; for ſince all who can labour are plac'd on one ſide, and made Debtors to Charity, the *Weak*, who are placed on the other ſide, and who have a Right to be ſupported by Charity, muſt be ſuch as are not able to work, or to provide for themſelves in any honeſt Calling or Employment. This Caſe is fully determined by the Apoſtle in his ſecond Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, *When we were with you*, ſays he, *this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat; for we hear that there are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working not at all, but are buſy-bodies: Now them that are ſuch we command, and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with quietneſs they work, and eat their own bread*, Chap. 3. Ver. 10, 11, 12.

Here you ſee all ſuch as could Work, excluded from the Benefit of Charity, and laid under a neceſſity to labour by this Injunction; *If they will not work, neither let them eat*; that is, let them not be ſupported in their Idleneſs, but be compelled by Hunger to do their Duty, that they may, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Eat their own Bread*, and not become a burden upon the Charity of the Church.

The general Rule then ariſing from theſe Apoſtolical Precepts, ſeems to be this: That ſuch only are due Objects of Charity, who are thro' Sickneſs or other Infirmity rendred incapable of Labours. And yet this Rule, if conſtrued to a rigorous Senſe, will be found inconſiſtent with Reaſon and Equity; for it may happen, that the Man who is moſt able to labour, and who does labour to the utmoſt of his Strength and Power, may be the moſt pitiable and unexceptionable Object of Charity: The Reaſon is, becauſe a Man is not in all Caſes able to earn ſo much as the Neceſſities of himſelf and Family require; and then he muſt either periſh, or be relieved; and his working for his Maintenance as much as he can, is ſo far from excluding him, that there cannot be a better Plea in his behalf. Where poor Families are numerous, and conſiſt moſtly of young Children, who can bring in nothing to the common Stock, by any thing they are capable

capable of doing, this Caſe often happens; and the Wants of the Family exceed all that the Diligence and Induſtry of the Parents can provide.

But tho' we cannot ſtate the Rule of Charity ſo, as to exclude all who can labour; yet it may ſeem reaſonable perhaps ſo to limit it, as that all who can work ſhou'd work before they are entitled to any Aſſiſtance from others. There is much more Equity in this than the other; yet even to require this, in all Caſes, wou'd be Cruel and Inhuman: We know the Caſualties that all human Things are ſubject to; we have ſeen many reduced to Poverty and Want, from the moſt flouriſhing and proſperous Condition: Fire and Water, Winds and Storms, which are the ſecret Miniſters of Providence, cauſe mighty Changes in the World, and often place the richeſt upon the ſame level with the pooreſt; and whenever it pleaſes God to ſet ſuch Inſtances before us, the tendereſt regard is due to their Misfortunes. When you ſee a Man fallen under ſuch Calamities, one perhaps too who has been a Father to the needy and friendleſs, who has relieved Hundreds in the Days of his Proſperity, wou'd you, when the Hand of God was upon him, turn aſide from his Affliction, and ſay, Go, work for your living? Tho' indeed in a reaſonable way of judging, they who have not

been inured to labour from their Youth, but have had a liberal ingenuous Education, may be fairly reckoned in the Number of thoſe who are not able to work. The Plea of the unjuſt Steward in the Goſpel, when 'tis put into the Mouth of ſuch an Honeſt Unfortunate Man, has every thing in it to move your Pity and Compaſſion, *I cannot dig, to beg I am aſhamed.*

Since then there can be hardly any general Rule fixed, which will be equally applicable to all Caſes, it may be worth our while to examine the Reaſon and Equity from which this Duty flows, which will ſerve to direct us in all the various Circumſtances under which the Objects of Charity preſent themſelves.

Charity is a relative Duty, and ſuppoſes the Diſtinction of Rich and Poor, ſince if there were no ſuch Diſtinction, there cou'd be no Reaſon aſſigned, why any Man ſhou'd part with what he has to another, who is already in as eaſy a Fortune and Condition as himſelf. The Diſtinction of Rich and Poor ſuppoſes Property; for if all Things were in common, and every Man had a Right to ſerve himſelf at Diſcretion out of the Heap, one cou'd not be richer than another, but every Man wou'd have an equal Title to every thing: But then how unequally ſoever the good Things of the World are divided, the Wants and Neceſſities of Nature are ſhared in com-

mon:

mon: The Poor are as ſenſible of Hunger, and Thirſt, and Cold, as the Rich are; and it cannot be ſuppoſed that God ſent Men into the World with ſuch Wants and Cravings, merely to Starve and Periſh under them; and yet how ſhall their Wants be ſupplied, who have nothing to ſupply them with? Steal they muſt not; for that would be to invade the Sacred Law of Property, and overturn the Order which God has ſettled and appointed: It remains therefore, that they muſt obtain the Things they want from the Proprietors of the World, in Exchange for ſuch Services as they are able to perform.

But is this, you'll ſay, a ſufficient Source for the Maintenance of the Poor? What if thoſe who are in Poſſeſſion ſhou'd refuſe to accept the Service of the Poor, in exchange for their Wealth? This wou'd be an hard Queſtion, were there not an equal Neceſſity on both ſides; had not Providence ſo ordered it, that the Rich can no more live without the Poor, than the Poor without the Rich; which being the Caſe, the Poor who are able to aſſiſt the Rich, can never want a Means of Subſiſtence. How wou'd a Rich Man differ from a Poor one, were he to ſerve himſelf in all the Neceſſities of Life? What wou'd ſignify your large Tracts of Land, were you to Plow and Sow with your own Hands? What Pleaſure or Advantage wou'd your numerous Flocks

Flocks yield, were you to Spin the Wool your ſelves, before you cou'd be defended from the Winter's Froſt? Since then the Rich are under a neceſſity of being ſerved by the Poor, as much as the Poor are of being maintained by the Rich, it evidently follows, that the Rich have as good a right to require Service from the Poor, as the Poor have to demand Maintenance from the Rich; and conſequently the Rich may as reaſonably withdraw their Maintenance, as the Poor withdraw their Service; which ſhews the Equity of the Rule in general; *if any Man will not work, neither let him eat*; for in Truth, were the Poor to be maintained without working, the Rich wou'd be in the worſe Caſe of the two; but there can be no Obligation on the Rich to exerciſe a Charity, which wou'd deſtroy the very Diſtinction of Rich and Poor; and therefore there can be no Obligation on the Rich to maintain an idle Poverty.

'Tis evidently then agreeable to Reaſon and Equity, That the Poor, who have Strength and Ability for Labour, ſhould work for their living. Let us in the next place conſider, How the Duty of the Rich ſtands with reſpect to this ſort of Poor.

The Right which all Men have to Maintenance and Subſiſtence, is a ſuperior Right to that of Property; for the great Law of Self-Preſervation, is antecedent to all private Laws

and

and Poſſeſſions whatever; the Conſequence of which is, that in the laſt reſult, the Property of the Rich is ſubject to the Maintenance of the Poor: Since then the Rich cannot in reaſon preſerve their Property longer than the Poor a way of Maintenance; and ſince the Poor have no other way, ordinarily ſpeaking, but their labour; it follows that the Rich are as much obliged to employ the Poor, as the Poor are to work for the Rich; and one is as much the neceſſary conſequence of the Diſtinction between Rich and Poor, as the other.

As reaſonable as this may ſeem upon the general View, yet 'tis hard to tell every particular Rich Man, what the Meaſure of his Duty is, in this Caſe; or how many Poor he ought to employ: But the Wiſdom of Providence has in great meaſure ſuperſeded this difficulty; for a Rich Man cannot enjoy his Eſtate, cannot live anſwerably to his Fortune and Condition, without creating a great deal of Work, for the Support and Encouragement of the Poor. The gayeſt of their Attire comes thro' the Hands of the Poor; and he that makes a fine Garment for you, will earn a coarſe one at leaſt for himſelf; he that ſearches the Seas and Woods to furniſh Dainties to your Table, ſupplies his own at the ſame time with wholeſome, tho' leſs Delicious Fare. Every Man therefore, who lives anſwerably to his Condition, does his part in furniſhing the Poor with

with Work and Maintenance: And in this Method the Poor receive Support from the Rich, in proportion to the different Degrees of their Wealth; for if all live ſuitably to their Condition, every Man will furniſh work to the Induſtrious, in Proportion to his Fortune.

Upon this View of the World, you may judge what real Iniquity there is in the Temper and Practice of the Covetous Penurious Miſer: That he denies himſelf the Comforts and Enjoyments of Life, is the leaſt part of his Crime; for whilſt he pinches himſelf, he ſtarves the Poor; and by living like a Beggar in the midſt of Plenty, he withdraws from the Needy and Induſtrious that Maintenance which God has appointed for them. Human Laws have provided no Remedy for this Evil, nor indeed can they; but it may one Day perhaps be found as Criminal to rob the Poor of their Work, as to rob the Rich of their Poſſeſſions. Nay, this Oppreſſion often meets with its Reward in the Second or Third Generation, even in this World. 'Tis common to ſee the Miſer's Son or Grandſon ſquander the Wealth of his Anceſtor, with the utmoſt Folly and Profuſeneſs; and when we behold ſuch Inſtances, can we help thinking, that the Providence of God is uſing the Extravagance of the Son, to do juſtice to the Poor, who were injured and oppreſs'd by the Penury of the Father?

Father? For whatever Miſchief Extravagancy may do to private Men and Families, yet this Good at leaſt flows from it, that the ſame Extravagance which is the Undoing of a Vain Rich Man, often makes way for the Advancement of many an induſtrious Poor one; or is at leaſt, for the time it laſts, a new Fund of Work thrown into the Maintenance of the Needy.

Whenever this ordinary Method of ſupporting the Poor fails, the providing for them is a Debt lying over the Poſſeſſions of the Rich, as a neceſſary Condition of that Law which ſecures them in their Property, by making it penal for the Poor to diſpoſſeſs them by Force or Violence. And this ſhews the Reaſonableneſs of our own Law, which has ſubjected all the Eſtates and Fortunes of the Kingdom to the Maintenance of the Poor, in defect of other Means; which is not a new Burden laid on private Property by the meer Strength of an arbitrary Law, but is the Voice of Reaſon and Nature acknowledged and enforced by the Wiſdom and Power of the Legiſlature.

You ſee then how the Duties ariſing from the Diſtinction of Rich and Poor, ſtand upon the Foot of natural Reaſon and Equity.

The Goſpel, tho' it has left Men in Poſſeſſion of their ancient Rights, yet has it enlarged the Duties of Love and Compaſſion; and taught

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Rich Men to conſider the Poor, not only as Servants, but as Brethren; and to look upon themſelves not only as the Maſters, but as the Patrons and Protectors of the Needy. Upon this View, the Induſtrious Poor are entitled to the Rich Man's Charity; ſince in the Candor of the Goſpel, we ought to aſſiſt our Poor Neighbours, not only to live, but to live comfortably: And an honeſt laborious Poverty has Charms in it to draw Relief from any Rich Man, who has the Heart of a Chriſtian, or even the Bowels of Nature. Mean Families, tho' perhaps they may ſubſiſt by their Work, yet go through much Sorrow to earn their Bread; if they complain not, they are more worthy of Regard; their ſilent Suffering, their contented Reſignation to Providence, entitle them to the more Compaſſion; and there is a Pleaſure not to be deſcribed in Words, which the Rich Man enjoys, when he makes glad the Hearts of ſuch patient Sufferers; and by his Liberality, makes them for a time forget their Poverty and Diſtreſs: That even with reſpect to the preſent Enjoyment, the Words of the Text are verified, *'Tis more bleſſed to give, than to receive.*

But to ſpeak of the Duty ſtrictly, Charity muſt begin where the Maintenance of the Poor fails; for whenever it becomes impoſſible for them to provide for themſelves, it becomes the Duty of others to provide for them.

them. Now Work being the Maintenance of the Poor, 'tis evident, that whenever their Work fails, they become Objects of Charity: And this happens many Ways; ſometimes it happens for want of Employment, and whenever it does, 'tis a noble Inſtance of Charity to furniſh Work for ſuch uſeful Hands. 'Tis a Charity which the Rich may make ſubſervient, either to their Pleaſure or their Profit; and be it either Profit or Pleaſure which accrues to the Rich Man, as it ariſes from Charity, it will bring a Bleſſing along with it; and look, whatſoever he doth it ſhall Proſper.

Sometimes their Want ariſes from Idleneſs, which is generally attended with great Corruption of Morals: When this is the Caſe, 'tis a Kindneſs, rather than a Puniſhment, to enure them to labour by wholeſome Diſcipline: For Work being the Poor Man's Maintenance, Idleneſs in him is the ſame Thing as Extravagance in the Rich; one deſtroys the Subſtance of the Poor, as effectually as the other does the Subſtance of the Rich.

That the Young, and the Old, whoſe Years render them incapable of taking Care of themſelves; that the Impotent and Lame, who have not only the Neceſſities, but the Miſeries of Life to ſtruggle with; that the diſeaſed in Body or Mind, who want either Strength or Reaſon to direct it to any uſeful Purpoſes, are all fit Objects of Chriſtian Charity and Com-

paſſion, is too well known to be inſiſted on. Theſe Calamities which are incident to Human Life, and are not always the Conſequences of Vice and Immorality, but come either in the Courſe of Nature, or are ſent by the ſecret Diſpoſition of the Almighty, what are they, but the Voice of Providence, the Hand of God demanding Charity?

To direct you to the proper Methods of Charity, in regard to the ſeveral Objects deſcribed, that the Offering of an Honeſt Heart may not be loſt thro' Miſapplication; would be an uſeful, were it a neceſſary part of this Day's Work: But behold, theſe Objects are all before you, and the Reports now to be read of the Charitable Inſtitutions of this Ancient and Worthy City, will ſhew you in what Hands you may ſafely truſt, whatever your Heart inclines you to offer to God for the Relief of the Miſerable.

Here the Report was Read.

You have had now the State of theſe Charities ſet before you; you ſee how uſefully their Revenue is applied, and yet how ſhort it falls of the ſeveral Occaſions. It remains on my part, that for the Encouragement of your Liberality, I ſhou'd ſpeak to the laſt Thing propoſed, namely,

What

What is the Bleſſing and Reward attending on the faithful Diſcharge of this Duty: *It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

The Time already ſpent admoniſhes me to be ſhort. In a word then: If you compare the Conditions into which Men are divided, and their ſeveral Duties; if you conſider the Obligation the Rich are under to aſſiſt the Needy, and compare it with the much harder Obligation the Poor are under to toil for a mean Livelihood; you will have reaſon to bleſs God who has placed you on the happier ſide, and to comply with the Duty of your Station with all Thankfulneſs to the Almighty, and to acknowledge, that he has choſen for you the better part; and if you diſcharge the Duties proper to your Condition, you may have this Comfort added to it, it ſhall not be taken from you.

2*dly*, In regard to the preſent Pleaſure and Satisfaction attending upon Works of Charity, the Giver has in all reſpects a better ſhare than the Receiver. The Poor Man has a preſent Comfort in the Relief of Charity, 'tis Eaſe to his Suffering, and 'tis an Encouragement to ſee that his Poverty is not deſpiſed by his Richer Neighbours, who are ſo compaſſionate, as to come to the Support and Aſſiſtance of it. But what is this to the Joy of giving Eaſe and Comfort to the oppreſſed; 'tis a Godlike Virtue to

do good, and the Pleasure of it has something in it so Divine, that Words cannot express. To *be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, to be a Father to the Poor*, and a Defender of all under Oppression, are Characters which bear some resemblance to the Prerogatives of the Almighty, and are the noblest Efforts of a rational Mind, aspiring to be like its great Creator.

3dly, If we look beyond this present Scene, the Difference is wider. There is no Virtue in being relieved, a Poor Man is not a better Man for the Charity he receives; it brings with it an Increase of Duty, and calls upon him for a more sure Trust on God, for greater Thankfulness to him; and some Obligations it lays him under, with respect to his Benefactors here. And it may happen, that the Charity which is his present Relief, may be a burden upon his future Account; and will be so, if he misapplies the Gift. But the Giver has a better Prospect before him, Charity is the Discharge of a Duty, and has the general Promises of Obedience; It is a Virtue likewise distinguished from the rest, and has its own Reward; the Blessings of the Life which is, and of that which is to come: 'Tis a Debt which God will own at the last Day; 'tis a Treasure transferred to Heaven, and will be repaid in never failing Riches.

Riches. To conclude, Charity is a double Maintenance; It gives Temporal Life to the Poor, and Spiritual Life to the Rich: It bestows the Comforts of this World on the Receiver, and the Glories of Immortality on the Giver.

FINIS.

Sermons by the Reverend Dr. SHERLOCK, *Dean of* Chicheſter.

1. A Sermon Preach'd before the Queen at St. *James*'s, *Jan.* 31. 1703-4.

2. A Sermon Preach'd before the Sons of the Clergy at St. *Paul*'s, *Dec.* 5. 1710.

3. A Sermon Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor, *&c.* at St. *Paul*'s, *Nov.* 5. 1712.

4. A Sermon Preach'd before the Honourable Houſe of Commons, at St. *Margaret*'s *Weſtminſter*, *March* 8. 1714.

5. A Sermon Preach'd at the *Temple-Church*, *November* 20, 1715.

6. A Sermon Preach'd before the Society for the Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign Parts, at St. *Mary-le-Bow*. *Feb.* 17. 1715.

7. A Sermon Preach'd before the Honourable Houſe of Commons, at St. *Margaret*'s *Weſtminſter*, *June* 7. 1716.

All Sold by John Pemberton.